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# PRESERVATION

May - June 1981

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

We are all now familiar with the notion that special consideration needs to be afforded certain "endangered species"—animals and plants whose limited numbers threaten their species' survival. The photographs in this issue of PRESERVATION identify some types of historic properties that are or may soon become "endangered species."

The circumstances that bring to question the continued life of historic and prehistoric properties differ widely. The continued existence of many built-to-last historic buildings depends on the availability of finding appropriate new uses for them. There are types of properties whose nature gives them a tenuous hold on life. Mining or homesteading shelters were often quickly constructed, intended to endure only until better circumstances. Archeological sites—whose artifacts and artifact locations serve prehistorians as diary pages serve historians—remain all too attractive to Sunday afternoon collectors.

We are keenly aware of the natural change and attrition that accompanies the growth and life of any community. We realize that the fascinating collection of historic resources we now see in Montana reflects layers of demolition and new construction. For the same reasons that individuals change, remodel, improve, tinker with (and sometimes botch up) their own homes, communities change, remodel, and rearrange their appearance.

If communities stop to weigh the contribution that a building makes to their town's appearance and character against the reasons for demolition and new construction, then the change that occurs is an acceptable part of the community's evolution. But if buildings come down because their value is overlooked, the economics of new construction versus rehabilitation is not known, or no effort is made to consider alternatives, then the loss is keener.

We are not defending the preservation of all older properties. Nor is "endangered species" meant to be an official classification of historic properties. It is a means to broaden our thinking on what types of buildings and sites may soon be threatened.

PLEASE RETURN

Wanda J. Walker

Fred Quivik

**HOMESTEAD SITES.** Where patterns of land use have changed dramatically, remainders of previous settlement are important reminders of our past. The preservation of abandoned homestead sites such as the one above in Prairie County or St. John's Church in Ringling is sometimes best accomplished by merely continuing to allow the buildings to stand.

**MINING STRUCTURES.** The remains of old mining camps and ore processing operations are a quickly vanishing resource in Montana. Threatened by deterioration and vandalism, few abandoned mining areas remain as intact as this collection of buildings in Jardine.

John Wilson

# Endangered Species...

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The Historic American Buildings Survey measured drawings of the Bozeman City Hall and Opera House were completed by John N. DeHaas in 1965, prior to the building's demolition. Photographs and measured drawings are ways to mitigate the loss of important architectural landmarks.

**CITY HALLS.** As Montana's cities grow, the pressure to expand city office space increases. Now demolished, the Bozeman City Hall (above, left) once housed virtually all city functions—the fire station, jail, city library, as well as city offices—while the Bozeman City Opera House occupied the second floor. In Kalispell, a new city hall (above) has been erected adjacent the old. The old is now slated for demolition. Neither the Bozeman nor Kalispell City Hall was thought feasible for reuse due to the degree of deterioration each had experienced. However, the cost of new construction is prompting many developers to thoughtfully look again at the possibilities of adaptive reuse of older buildings.

*Lon Johnson*

**HOSPITALS.** St. Patrick's Hospital (below) a the Sacred Heart Academy in Missoula were bo built by the noted local architect, A.J. Gibson. D ing the 1950's, St. Patrick's was demolished and new hospital was rebuilt on the site. In 1979, t Academy met the wrecking ball despite vigoro efforts by local preservationists. Another n hospital will be built on this site. Two city blocks Missoula and two buildings of historic and arc tectural significance were sacrificed to meet t demands of expanding hospital services.

**GRAIN ELEVATORS.** With the impending change ton Northern's grain loading policies, many of t elevators (left, at Big Timber) in Montana will no longe continue service to local farmers. These elevators ha been important visual landmarks in agricultural co along the railroad line.

John DeHaas

**DOWNTOWN HOTELS.** The automobile encouraged construction of roadside motels on the outskirts of town, and many downtown hotels have failed financially. The older hotels represent valuable building stock, and many may be successfully rehabilitated for different uses. Although not destroyed, the Montana Hotel, Anaconda (left, during and before changes), was changed so significantly that it was removed from the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. The Tax Reform Acts of 1976 and 1978 offer substantial incentives for the sensitive rehabilitation of historic buildings, many of which have excellent potential to be adapted for offices, commercial space, or housing.

**GRAND MANSIONS.** Built by cattleman William C. Orr in 1884, this Dillon landmark now needs new owners and perhaps a new use to ensure its survival. Vacant for a number of years, the Orr Mansion faces the deterioration caused by lack of maintenance. However, much of the original architectural detail remains in place. Left alone, a building is also threatened by vandalism.

**COUNTY JAILS.** With stricter requirements regarding health and safety codes, many county jails will no longer be deemed suitable to fulfill their original function. Because jails were often extremely well constructed, new uses may be found for many. The prisoners were removed last year from the jail in Thompson Falls (above) and the building now secures the Sanders County Historical Society's collection.

**FARM BUILDINGS.** The frame barn and associated outbuildings are victims of the change in farming methods. New machinery has reduced the need for many of these structures which once housed animals. The older wooden farm buildings are rapidly being replaced by concrete and metal structures.

**NATIVE AMERICAN SITES.** Pictographs, petroglyphs, and other visible signs of historic and prehistoric Native American occupation exist under the constant threat of vandalism. This wickiup frame near Lima was recently listed in the National Register. The special recognition afforded by Register listing may help to encourage the structure's preservation.

Sara Scott

**PASSENGER DEPOTS.** With the abandonment of passenger rail service in Montana, many railroad depots no longer fulfill their original function. Generally well constructed, these depots (Miles City, below right, and Big Sandy) may continue to serve communities as museums, community centers, commercial spaces, offices, or any number of other uses. Often the depot would be the first building to be constructed in a new community along the railway line. Now they stand as important reminders of rail transportation's development in the state.

Fort Missoula Historical Museum

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### Grant Reminder

We remind those of you interested in applying for Historic Preservation Fund Grants for Fiscal Year 1982 that the application deadline is August 1, 1981. Application may be made for either Survey and Planning Grants or Acquisition and Development Projects. But we also want to remind you that the availability of any grant dollars from the Department of Interior to Montana or other states is wholly dependent on Congress' current budget work. President Reagan's proposed budget included no Historic Preservation Fund money for states. However, Congress continues to rearrange funding within the ceilings that have now been approved for various Federal departments. Until we know the final outcome of Congressional action, we urge you to tell us of your interest in grant funds and begin the application process. But we do want you to tailor the amount of time and expectation put into the application to our uncertain circumstances.

# Preservation Perspectives

by Marcella Sherfy

The accompanying photographic essay displays Montana properties that are either endangered, specifically or as a category, or have been destroyed.

The State Historic Preservation Office and many State preservation activities are also "endangered properties" right now. And while we are encouraging Montanans to plot out the fate of their older properties carefully, we want to tell you clearly what is happening to our office and why thoughtful consideration of historic properties may be more difficult in the future. We seek your specific consideration of the ramifications of our circumstances. We invite your ideas on how we should confront the situation.

The Reagan budget, as currently being considered by the House of Representatives and the Senate, includes no funding for State Preservation Offices or Historic Preservation grants for surveys or rehabilitation projects. Internal shifts in the budget may produce minimal funding, but we can't predict that now. The loss of Federal preservation dollars means that developers, cities, even other State agencies cannot seek Historic Preservation Funds to assist with building rehabilitation. But more important, the loss of survey money and of Preservation Office staff would mean the loss of any assistance to property owners, communities, and regions in identifying and evaluating resources whose existence at least needs consideration.

We are looking at the loss of all money to help fund community architectural and historical inventories. We anticipate significantly less time or staff, if any, to nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places. We are facing Montana's inability to comment—from the perspective of knowing our state and our heritage—on which historic and prehistoric resources should be considered or ignored in the development of mine plans or power corridors or timber sales.

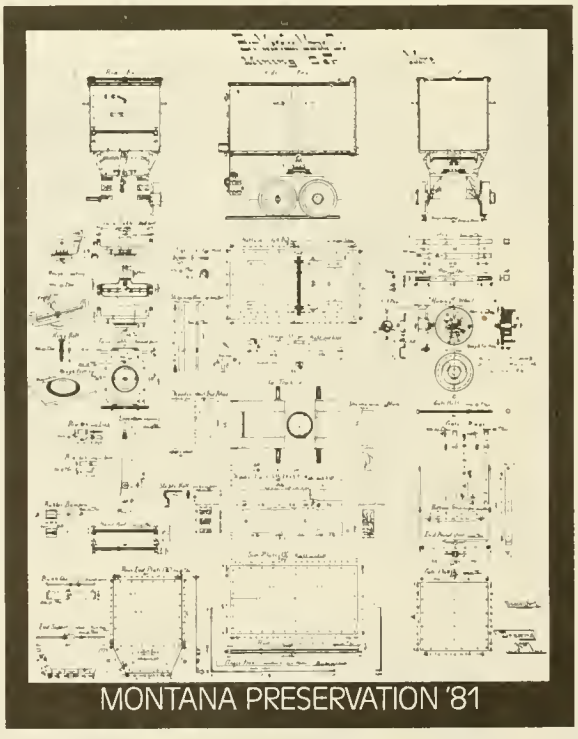
When the particular future of assistance for preservation becomes a political dollar issue, we think that its defense lies not in terms of buildings or sites saved or lost. It lies in whether Montanans want a fighting chance to consider the relative merit of saving or losing their own resources.

We know the amount of hard rock and surface mining, oil and gas drilling, and related new housing and commercial development that will change our Montana landscapes. In the face of those pressures, the State can either choose to make conscious choices about the loss of its cultural heritage; or let Federal land managing or permitting agencies do so; or let circumstances rule.

We urge you to mull the issue over thoughtfully. We urge you to write us with your ideas on the way in which an office like ours and a state like ours should face the loss of control over our own resources' future that Federal budget cutting may mean. The request is not made rhetorically. We will, in the next few months, be called on to explain how Montana's cultural resources can be afforded appropriate, thoughtful consideration. And in that effort, your thinking is critical.

# Posters Offered for Sale

Each year, in conjunction with National Historic Preservation Week, the National Trust for Historic Preservation publishes and distributes a special, thematic poster. We've liked the idea, but wished to celebrate Montana historic resources more personally that week and the other 51. So, we announce the availability of a special poster, entitled Montana Preservation '81. We want it to be the start of a series.




The publication of this first poster represents the combined efforts of the Society's Merchandising office, Archives Division, and Preservation Office. The poster is drawn from the Granite Bi-Metallic Consolidated Mining Company Records in the Society's archival collection. It is an exact reproduction of measured drawings for the construction of a mining car belonging to the company that was located in the section of Deer Lodge County that became Granite County.

Although plans such as those depicted in the poster are first produced to permit construction of a building or an object, their survival aids us enormously in preservation or restoration efforts. The preparation of measured drawings is often done, also, just before the demolition of important buildings that cannot be saved.

The poster measures 31"x24" and is available in black on buff stock or black on white. It sells at the Historical Society Museum for $3.50, and is available by mail for $5.50 including mailing charges. Order from Merchandising Dept., Montana Historical Society, 225 N. Roberts, Helena 59620.